

Opening Remarks
Gerardo A. Porta, USAID/OEDG
Workshop on Integrating the Basic Mediation
Curricula
Pan Pacific Hotel, Ermita, Manila
November 21, 2005, 9:00 a.m.

Justice Ameurfina Herrera;

Chairman Alfredo Tadiar;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat.

On behalf of the United States Agency for
International Development (USAID), I am
delighted to join you this morning in this
pioneering workshop conducted under the
**Integration of Mediation Curricula and
Training Programs** project.

As many of you know, USAID has been supportive of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in the Philippines for more than twenty years now. Within the courts, USAID, through The Asia Foundation, has supported the use of ADR processes from the time the Supreme Court issued in 2001 a resolution designating the Philippine Judicial Academy (PhilJA) as the unit responsible for court-referred, court-related mediation cases and other ADR mechanisms.

We wish to compliment PhilJA, under the inspiring leadership of Justice Ameurfina Herrera, for actively promoting ADR within the judiciary, particularly in selected trial courts through its Court Annexed Mediation (CAM) and the Judicial Reforms

Initiative Support (JURIS) projects, and in the Court of Appeals through the Appellate Court Mediation (ACM) initiative. These programs, which have resulted in the referral of more than 61,000 cases to mediation since 2002, give substance to Chief Justice Hilario Davide's vision of a "judiciary that is independent, effective and efficient."

The success of ADR within the formal justice system is largely due to the commitment of highly skilled and trained mediators, some of whom are present here in this workshop. We congratulate you for your vigorous efforts to bring peaceful and swift resolution to cases brought before the courts. In order to produce highly skilled

mediators, however, there is a need to develop effective and appropriate curriculum design and training process for courses in mediation and ADR, which this activity aims to achieve. We believe that the integration of the various mediation curricula and training programs will lead to the development of uniform high standards for the training of mediators. This will help generate greater interest among the legal profession and the general public in mediation, and, ultimately, lead to a wider acceptance of mediation and other ADR processes in lieu of litigation.

USAID wishes to compliment the Institute for Social Studies and Action for undertaking this worthy endeavor in partnership with

PhilJA, The Asia Foundation, and the Judicial Reforms Initiative Support (JURIS) Project. The court-annexed mediators in this country are very fortunate to have the support of the foremost experts on ADR.

USAID remains firm in its commitment to support programs that contribute to an efficient judiciary in the country.

We wish all the participants and organizers success in today's workshop and look forward to everybody's active participation.

Mabuhay at Maraming Salamat po!